

REMARKS

Applicant, Jeffrey Mannion, and Applicants' attorney, John Williams, acknowledge with thanks the interview of November 7, 2005, kindly accorded them by Examiners Novosad and Chilcot.

During the course of the interview the construction and utility of Applicants' novel container support, in its various aspects, was explained. A sample overcap was demonstrated.

The Examiners' attention was drawn to the current situation in merchandise displays, in which goods in flexible packaging typically are given high visibility, but goods in relatively rigid containers, such as chips, nuts and tennis balls, often are relegated to inconvenient low shelving that does not have good sales visibility. Likewise, the Examiners' attention was drawn to the inconvenience in many instances of carrying relatively rigid containers, e.g., the difficulty of carrying both a cup of coffee and a cup of cereal in one hand or of carrying a tennis racket and a can of tennis balls in one hand.

At the interview, Applicant Mannion and Applicants' attorney explained the invention and called attention to the display, Fig. 5, and the carrying of goods of Figs. 2 and 3, made possible with embodiments of this invention.

It was explained that, according to the invention, a support is provided that is constructed to be connected with a predetermined container of the type having an upper rim or similar upper formation. The support in important cases is a circular ring, e.g. Fig. 1, but may for instance be a square ring, Fig. 12. In important alternatives, the support may be part of a lid or overcap closure, or it may not form a closure.

The support comprises a ring or similar surrounding structure larger than the upper formation of the predetermined container, and constructed to surround and connect with the upper formation of the container to suspend the container with its contents. The ring or similar surrounding structure is shallow, having an axial dimension substantially less than its lateral dimensions.

A flexible suspending element is constructed and arranged to support the ring or similar surrounding structure and, thereby, the container. The suspending element has an as-formed lower position. A free portion of this flexible suspending element is arranged to be lifted by

flexing of the suspending element from its as-formed position to a raised operating position for engagement by a carrier. The carrier may be, e.g., a rod of a sales rack or a finger of a user. This suspends the container by its upper formation in a position below the carrier for display or transport. The suspending element and the ring or similar surrounding structure are so cooperatively related that lifting the free portion of the suspending element to raised operating position and applying container-suspending force to the raised portion does not disturb the connection with the upper formation of the predetermined container with its contents.

In an important aspect of invention, the suspending element lies generally within the ring or similar supporting structure. In preferred embodiments of this aspect, the suspending element extends inwardly of the ring or surrounding structure from a flexible proximal region to the free portion. The location of the suspending element generally with the ring or similar supporting structure contributes to the ease of automated handling during manufacture and application to the container.

In another important aspect of the invention, the upper formation of a predetermined container is at least two inch diameter; there is a single flexible suspending element having length greater than half the distance across the support; the suspending element is located to impart a tilt to the container and the suspending element is of the same material as that of a ring or similar surrounding structure portion and of monolithic, molded form. Such construction enables the displays and handling exemplified for instance by Figs. 1, 2, 3, 5, 14, 15, and 16.

It was explained at the interview that people in the packaging industry have recognized the novelty of applicant's contribution, see for instance the attached sales sheet produced by Sonoco, a major member of the packaging industry. It is believed to be just a matter of time before versions of the invention will be seen in the retail marketplace.

Applicants' attorney brought out that the principal reference, Ingemann, is different in concept and structure. For instance, there is no teaching in Ingemann of a suspending element so cooperatively related with a ring or similar supporting structure that lifting the free portion of the suspending element to raised operating position and applying container-suspending force to the

raised free portion does not disturb the connection of the ring or similar structure with the upper formation of the predetermined container with its contents.

At the interview claims A and X (now claims 62 and 63) were reviewed with the Examiners and agreement was reached with respect to the allowability of these claims. By the present amendment, Applicants amend claim 1 in manner reflecting essentials of this agreement. Claim 1 has been prepared to be generic to all previous dependent claims as now amended.

The defendant claims have been amended throughout for clarification and to improve their phrasing and scope.

The basis for the amendment to claim 9 is found in Fig. 7a and related text in the specification.

The basis for new defendant claim 64 is at page 29 of the specification. This combination contributes importantly to the ease of manufacturing lids and overcaps having the suspending feature.

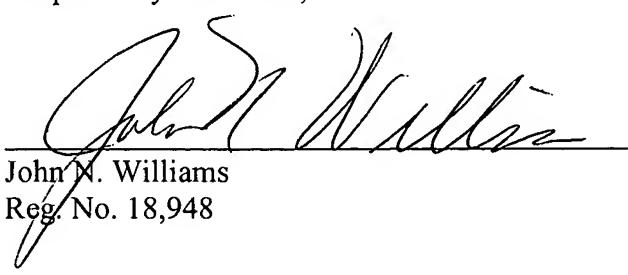
Claims 19-25, 35 and 43-61, previously withdrawn, have been amended to be dependent directly or indirectly on claim 1 and are requested to be rejoined.

For the above reasons, it is submitted that all claims now presented are patentable over the prior art of record and early favorable action is solicited.

Enclosed is a check for \$225.00 for the Petition for Extension of Time fee. Please apply any other charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050, referencing attorney docket number listed above.

Respectfully submitted,

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